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ABSTRACT

This study investigated similarities and differences in Egyptian Arabic and American English refusals, using a modified discourse completion test (DCT) consisting of three requests, three invitations, three offers, and three suggestions. Each situation included one refusal to a person of higher status, one to a person of equal status, and one to a person of lower status. Interactions were oral. Thirty United States interviews resulted in 358 refusals and 25 Egyptian interviews resulted in 300 refusals. The refusals were categorized by formula and analyzed for order, directness (a dimension of communication style), and frequency of semantic formulas. Results suggest that both groups use similar semantic formulas with similar frequency in making refusals and use a similar number of direct and indirect formulas, although Egyptians used more direct formulas in the equal-status situations. Both groups had similar reasons for refusing. In some situations, however, the order of semantic formulas varied and the U.S. respondents used more expressions of gratitude. (Contains 56 references.) (Author/MSE)

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Refusals and Communication Style in American English and Egyptian Arabic

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Gayle Nelson

Abstract

This study investigated similarities and differences between Egyptian Arabic and American English refusals using a modified version of the 12-item discourse completion test (DCT) developed by Beebe, Takahashi, and Uliss-Weltz (1990). The DCT consisted of three requests, three invitations, three offers, and three suggestions. Each situation type included one refusal to a person of higher status, one to a person of equal status, and one to a person of lower status: With DCTs, participants usually respond to situations in writing. In this study, however, to more closely simulate real life communication and because Arabic is a diglossic language, an interviewer read the situation aloud and the participants responded verbally on audiotape, Egyptians in Arabic and Americans in English. Audiotapes were transcribed, the Egyptian tapes into Arabic and the American tapes into English. Thirty U.S. interviews resulted in 358 refusals and 25 Egyptian interviews resulted in 300 refusals. The refusals were divided into formulas. Using the coding categories developed by Beebe et al., two trained coders categorized the formulas. Intercoder reliability was 89% for the U.S. data and 85% for the Arabic data. Data were analyzed according to order; directness, a dimension of communication style; and frequency of semantic formulas. Reasons for refusing were also examined. Results suggest that both groups use similar semantic formulas with similar frequency in making refusals. Although the literature on Arabic communication style (e.g.,Cohen, 1987, 1990; Feghali, 1997; Katriel, 1986; Zaharna, 1990) characterizes Arabic speakers as preferring indirect communication and American English speakers as preferring direct

communication, the findings of this study do not support this dichotomy. Both groups employed a similar number of direct and indirect formulas, although overall the Egyptians used more direct formulas in the equal status situations. Both groups also employed similar reasons for refusing. Although the groups shared many similarities, they also differed. In some situations, the order of semantic formulas varied and the U.S. respondents used more expressions of gratitude.

Introduction

The term "speech act" has been defined as a minimal unit of discourse (Searle, 1969), a basic and functional unit of communication (Cohen, 1995). Examples of speech acts include giving and responding to compliments, asking questions, apologizing, leavetaking, making introductions, and making refusals. Cross-cultural comparisons of speech acts are of interest to applied linguists (Canale & Swain, 1980; Hymes, 1972, 1974; Wolfson, 1981, 1983, 1989) in part because they provide insights into the linguistic and sociolinguistic rules of a language. Many cross-cultural speech act studies have been conducted under the theoretical framework of contrastive pragmatics. Comparisons of speech acts are also of interest because they contribute to understanding cultural differences in communiation style.

Contrastive Pragmatics

One goal for conducting cross-cultural studies of speech acts is to obtain pragmatic knowledge of the rules of the speech act. Thomas (1983) defines pragmatic competence as "the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context" (p. 94). Thomas goes on to point out that if an L1 speaker perceives the purpose of an L2 utterance as other than the L2 speaker intended, pragmatic failure has occurred. One cause of pragmatic failure is pragmatic transfer, the use of L1 speech act strategies that are inappropriate in the corresponding L2 setting. The transfer of L1 speech act strategies to L2 situations has been addressed in a number of speech act

studies (Beebe, Takahashi & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Blum-Kulka, 1982, 1983; Edmonson, House, Kasper, & Stemmer, 1984; Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986; Garcia, 1989; Houck & Gass, 1995; Olshtain, 1983; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Stevens, 1993; Takahashi & Beebe, 1993; Thomas, 1984). If L1 and L2 strategies are similar, however, the transfer of strategies from the L1 to the L2 may result in pragmatic success (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993).

Communication Style

Communication style is an elusive notion to define. Gudykunst and Ting-Toomey (1988) define it as a "meta-message that contextualizes how individuals should accept and interpret a verbal message" (p. 100). One dimension of communication style that has been identified, studied, and used to describe communication differences between Arabic and English speakers is the direct/indirect dimension.

The direct/indirect dimension refers to the "extend speakers reveal their intentions through explicit communication" (Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988, p. 100). A direct style of communication refers to explicitly stating one's feelings, wants, and needs; the speakers says what he or she means. An indirect style, on the other hand, refers to "verbal messages that camouflage and conceal speakers' true intentions in terms of their wants, needs, and goals in the discourse situation" (p. 100).

The literature on Arabic communication style proposes that indirectness is one of its defining characteristics (e.g., Cohen, 1987, 1990; Feghali, 1997; Katriel, 1986; Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1988; Zaharna, 1995). Studies on Arabic communication style have been heavily influenced by Hall's (1976) model of high vs. low

context cultures. A high context communication or message is "one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message" (p. 91). Conversely, in low context communication most of the information is in the explicit code (i.e., in the words). According to Hall's model, Arabic culture is considered to be high context (i.e., less direct) and the American culture is low context (i.e., more direct). In spite of the oversimplification that results from dichotomizing cultural patterns, Hall's model continues to be used by scholars, in part, because the model makes complex differences in communication understandable and also because empirical research has supported many of Hall's contentions (e.g., Gudykunst; 1983; Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Ting-Toomey, Nishida, Kim, & Heyman, 1996; Gudykunst & Nishida, 1985).

Cohen (1987; 1990), borrowing from Hall, explains the indirectness of Arabic communication style within the context of political negotiations between Israel and Egypt over a thirty year period. He maintains that the Arabic language reflects a high context culture in which "what is not said is sometimes more important that what is said" (p. 42). English, on the other hand, reflects a low context culture in which "words represent truth" (p. 42). Cohen (1990) points out that in Arabic, directness is much disliked and that great pains will be taken to avoid saying no and that "circumlocution, ambiguity, and metaphor help to cushion against the danger of candor" since a refusal will cause embarrassment (p. 43). In contrast, Cohen (1987) proposes that Americans prefer communicating "straight from the shoulder",

stating explicitly "what has to be said" (p. 31).

In an ethnographic study, Katriel (1986) contrasts the indirectness of Arabic communication style with the Hebrew Dugri, a communication style used by the Israeli Sabra culture that emphasizes "speaking straight to the point" (p. 10). She also contrasts Dugri with the Tough Talk of American culture. The intent of the Tough Talker is illustrated by Gibson, "I say what I mean. If I mean the same thing twice, I say the same thing twice, and I don't care if it offends the so-called rules of so-called graceful prose" (cited in Katriel, p. 102). According to Katriel, Arabic communication style can be described as Sweet Talk since it is based on the cultural ethos of Musayara. Musayra refers to "metaphorically 'going with' the other, on humoring, on accommodating oneself to the position or situation of the other" and "reflects a concern for harmonious social relations and for the social regulation of interpersonal conduct" (p. 111). This "going with" reflects the indirect style of the language and which, according to her informants, "is in the blood of every Arab person" (p. 111). Katriel also notes the importance of status in Arabic, pointing out that the [Arab] person "lower in hierarchy is usually required to do Musayara to the one higher up" unlike a Sabra who will speak his or her mind under any circumstances (p. 112).

Based on theoretical models on communication style differences, Zaharna (1995) compares cultural variations of messages in American and Arab communication preferences. She concludes that the American culture shows a preference for direct, accurate, clear and explicit communication while Arabic exhibits

an indirect, symbolic, ambiguous, and implicit style. Feghali (1997) also reviewed the research on Arabic communication patterns and concludes that Arabic speakers communicate indirectly, that they often conceal "desired wants, needs, or goals during discourse" (p. 358).

Studies on American communication style include Okabe (1983), who in a study comparing Japanese and Americans, concludes that "Americans' tendency to use explicit words is the most noteworthy characteristic of their communication style" (p. 36). In a study of the development of communication style in children, Johnson and Johnson (1975) note that American children are socialized to speak the truth, to be honest.

Such descriptions of communication styles in Arabic and American English are problematic because they represent generalizations that are drawn from non-empirical models (e.g., Hall, 1976) and from anecdotal and personal experiences and impressions rather than from empirical data. In addition, such descriptions present Arabic linguistic and cultural patterns as neatly homogeneous, overlooking the differences that exist among the various Arab communities in terms of education, gender and degree of contact with western cultures. Examination of cultural and communication patterns in any society should be based on data, systematically collected and analyzed. This paper presents such a study.

Speech act studies have been criticized as being ethnocentric in that most have investigated variations of English (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Rose, 1994). The present study is valuable, in part, because it was conducted in Arabic as well as

English and the results contribute to understanding appropriate ways to make refusals in Egyptian Arabic and to a better understanding of Arabic communication style. To date, little research has been conducted on Arabic speech acts (exceptions include Hussien, 1995; Nelson, El Bakary, & Al Batal, 1993; 1995; Nelson, Al Batal, & Echols, 1996; Stevens, 1993).

Refusals

Refusals are important speech acts to investigate cross-culturally because they are face-threatening, and the possibility of offending someone is inherent in the act itself (Beebe & Takahashi, 1989). In making a refusal, an individual rejects an offer initiated by another or backs out of an agreement. By refusing, the individual risks offending the initiator. Because of this risk, "some degree of indirectness usually exists" (p. 56). In other words, the person who refuses may need to mitigate the force of the refusal.

Moreover, refusals are interesting sociolinguistically in that they are complex, involving long sequences, and vary according to sociolinguistic variables such as status (Beebe et al., 1990; Houck & Gass, 1995). They are also interesting because "their form and content vary according to the eliciting speech act (e.g., invitation, request, offer, or suggestion)" (Beebe et al., 1990, p. 56).

Few comparative studies have been conducted on refusals. A major study (Beebe et al., 1990) compared the refusals given by

native speakers of Japanese and native speakers of English[1] using a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). A DCT consists of structured written discourse -- part of which is left open and part of which is closed, "providing both the speech act and the rejoinder" (Cohen, 1995, p. 24). The rejoinder makes it clear that the subject is to make a refusal. The DCT situations in Beebe et al.'s study consist of three requests, three invitations, three offers, and three suggestions.

The findings of Beebe et al.(1990) clearly demonstrate the importance of status in the refusal strategies selected by the respondents. Americans, in refusing requests from higher and lower status persons, followed a similar pattern. They frequently began by expressing a positive feeling or opinion, then expressed regret, and ended the refusal with a reason. However, when higher status Americans refused individuals of lower status, they at times ended the refusal with a direct formula. In refusing a request from an equal status person, the Americans usually began with an expression of regret and then gave a reason for the refusal. In contrast, the Japanese were more direct if the respondent were addressing a lower status person. As Beebe et al. note, the Japanese "omitted apology/regret when they were higher status than the requester" (p. 59).

Status was also an important factor in refusing invitations. When Japanese respondents were in the higher status position

[1] The primary purpose of the study by Beebe at al. (1990) was to investigate the amount of transfer from Japanese when native speakers of Japanese made refusals in English. In their study, they included other groups of participants (e.g., Japanese speaking English). We did not include these groups in the review of literature because we are comparing Arabic and English refusals and not investigating transfer. A study by Houck and Gass (1995) also investigated transfer by analyzing English refusals made by native Japanese speakers.

refusing an invitation from someone of lower status, they generally omitted expressions of apology or regret in a manner similar to refusing requests. In making refusals to persons of higher status, the Japanese were more polite, using more mitigations strategies (e.g., statements of positive opinion and empathy) than in addressing persons of lower status. On the other hand, Americans used similar strategies in refusing all invitations, often beginning with an adjunct, followed by an expression of regret and a reason for the refusal. With status equals, Americans often ended the refusal with a "thank you." In their analysis of the reasons that each group used for refusing, Beebe et al found differences between the Americans and Japanese. One difference was specificity; Americans tended to be more specific in their reasons, whereas Japanese excuses tended to be "nonspecific as to place, time, or parties involved" (p. 66).

Stevens (1993) studied Arabic and English refusals, also using a written DCT. His DCT consisted of 15 situations, eight requests and seven offers/invitations. His findings, similar to those of Beebe et al. (1990), revealed that refusals involve multiple formulas and that interlocutors seldom refuse outright. His analysis indicated that both Arabic and English speakers used many of the same formulas (e.g., explanations, non-committal strategies, partial acceptances, and white lies). Because of the similarities between Egyptian and American refusal strategies, Stevens concludes that Egyptian learners may not need to be explicitly taught refusal strategies since there may be a good deal of positive pragmatic transfer from Arabic to English.

Steven's study was valuable in that it is one of the first

studies to compare Arabic and English refusals, yet the study does not investigate the role of status nor the order of formulas in making refusals. It also does not indicate the frequency of each formula type nor analyze the types of reasons given for refusing.

Hussien (1995) discusses refusals in Arabic as part of his study of speech acts in Arabic. He lists some of the strategies used by Arabic native speakers in refusals and maintains that indirect refusals are used with acquaintances of equal status and with close friends of unequal status. Hussein's study is descriptive in nature and is based on examples which he gathered by means of participant observation. A problem exists, however, with his examples. Although he maintains that the data occurred naturalistically (i.e., the utterances were spoken), the examples used are written in Modern Standard Arabic, a formal variety of Arabic that is not used for daily communication.

The Present Study

This study investigated American English and Egyptian Arabic refusals to determine similarities and differences in 1) the order and frequency of semantic formulas, 2) the degree of directness/indirectness, 3) the role of status, and 4) the kinds of reasons given to justify the refusal.

Subjects

Fifty-five subjects participated in this study: 30 English-speaking Americans in the United States and 25 Arabic-speaking Egyptians in Egypt. The American subjects were between 24 and 40 years of age; half were females and half males. All of the Americans had bachelors' degrees and lived in Atlanta, Georgia although many were originally from other parts of the United

States. Sixteen worked in business (e.g., software engineering), eight were graduate students, and six were teachers. The Egyptian subjects were between 19 and 39 years of age; fifteen were male and ten were female. Fourteen were university students; the others had bachelors' degrees and worked as professionals in their fields (e.g., engineers). Before the interviews, the interviewers (i.e., two of the researchers and graduate research assistants) asked interviewees if they were willing to be interviewed on audiotape for a sociolinguistic study. If they agreed, they signed a consent form giving their permission.

Method of Data Collection

Wolfson (1981, 1983) and others (Hymes, 1962; Wolfson, Maarmor & Jones, 1989) have argued for the study of naturally occurring speech act data using ethnomethodology. Other researchers, however, have pointed out the limitations of ethnographic data collection for cross-cultural studies due to problems of comparability (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989) and problems of controlling gender and status, of notetaking that relies on the researcher's memory, of the infrequent use of speech act being studied, and of the time-consuming nature of data collection (Cohen, 1996).

In this study, a modified version of the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) used by Beebe at el. (1990) was used to collect the data. We chose to use the DCT because (1) the situations had already been developed and piloted and (2) our results could be more easily compared to those of other researchers. We did, however, modify the method. First, instead of subjects reading the situation and responding in writing, an

interviewer read each situation aloud to the subjects and asked them to respond verbally on audiotape. Spoken elicitation and the corresponding refusals were used because they more closely resemble real life communication than written role plays. Evidence that supports the use of spoken elicitations and responses is provided by Beebe and Cumming (1995). They compared two methods of eliciting telephone data: talk versus written questionnaire responses. They found that subjects talked four times more than they wrote. In addition, oral responses are more appropriate for Arabic speakers. Arabic is a diglossic language with a written version (FusHa) and a spoken one (ᶜamiyya). To ask respondents to write their responses would be unrealistic since they would be producing responses they do not use in real life.

A second modification was the elimination of the rejoinders. The elicitations were thus open-ended, allowing the respondents more flexibility in their responses. Finally, two situations in the DCT were slightly changed at the suggestion of the Egyptian researcher. In item 1 of the original version of the DCT, an employee asks for an increase in pay. Because it is uncommon for employees to ask for pay increases in Egypt, the situation was changed. In the version used in this study, the employee asks to take the week-end off. Item 8 was changed from asking a language teacher to provide more practice in conversation in class to asking a teacher to provide more application and case studies instead of lecturing all the time. This item was changed so that the content was more applicable to a wider range of disciplines than foreign language instruction.

The instrument consists of 12 situations that demand a

refusal: three requests, three invitations, three offers, and three suggestions. Each situation type includes one refusal to a person of higher status, one to a person of equal status, and one to a person of lower status (see Appendix A for the complete instrument). Requests are defined as polite demands for something; the requester asks a favor of the other person (e.g., asking to borrow class notes). Invitations are types of requests, often for someone to come to dinner or a party; however, instead of asking a favor, the inviter is usually attempting to be thoughtful and kind. Offers refer to asking individuals if they want something (e.g., a piece of cake). Suggestions are ideas put forward for people to consider (e.g., to lecture less in class).

To insure the equivalency of the Arabic and English version of the elicitation instrument, Barnlund and Araki's (1985) method of translation was followed for the Arabic version. First, the English version was translated into Arabic by one of the researchers, a native speaker of Arabic. Second, the Arabic version was assessed by two other individuals fluent in Arabic and English. Finally, the Arabic version was back-translated into English by a professional translator. The existing discrepancies were resolved in discussions between the translator, the Egyptian researcher, and another bilingual.

After the interviews were completed, the audiotapes were transcribed. The American tapes were transcribed into English and the Egyptian tapes into Arabic. The Arabic transcriptions were also translated into English, but the primary analysis of the Arabic refusals was based on the Arabic transcripts, not the English translations. The 30 U.S. interviews resulted in 358

American English refusals (2 interviews yielded 11 refusals). The 25 Egyptian interviews resulted in 300 Egyptian Arabic refusals.

Data Analysis

As Cohen (1995) notes, one of the first concerns of speech act researchers is to arrive at a set of formulas "typically used by native speakers of the target language" (p. 21). In order to arrive at a set of formulas, the researchers first divided the utterances into separate formulas, also referred to as idea units (Chafe, 1980), thought groups (Fanselow, 1987) and T-units (Hunt, 1965). A formula is often a single independent clause. For example, the U.S. refusal below was divided into four formulas.

(1) (i) We really need you right now
(ii) and we've lost some good workers lately
(iii) and I don't think you'll be able to leave.
(iv) I'm sorry. (AF1)[2]

For the Egyptian data, the Arabic transcripts were used to parse the refusals into formulas. Dividing the refusals into formuals also keeps the researchers analytically honest; all the data are accounted for. As Miles and Huberman (1994) argue, qualitative data should be quantified as a test for possible researcher bias.

While parsing the refusals into formulas, the researchers became familiar with the data. They observed that the formulas seemed similar to the formulas discussed in Beebe et al., 1990 (Appendix B). To determine if the data from this study did, in fact, match the classification system used in Beebe et al., the

[2] The A or E in front of the utterance refers to American or Egyptian; the F or M refers to female or male speakers; and the number refers to the particular interview.

researchers, in a preliminary analysis, classified the U.S. data using the system developed by Beebe et al.. Because the data fit the classification scheme, the researchers used it.

The English data were then coded by two trained native-English speaking graduate research assistants. The Arabic data were coded by two native Arabic speakers, one of the researchers and a graduate research assistant. The coders worked independently and coded all of the formulas in each refusal. Based on the coding, the scheme was adjusted slightly. Intercoder reliability was 89% for the English data and 85% for the Arabic data. For items on which there was disagreement, the coders reviewed the coding guidelines and recoded the data until they came to a consensus. Following the guidelines set forth by Krippendorf (1980) and Holsti (1969), the categories were exhaustive (i.e., all data were represented in one of the categories) and mutually exclusive (i.e., a response could belong to only one category). A composite of all the coded formulas is presented later in the article.

Results and Discussion

After the coding was completed, data were analyzed according to the order and directness/indirectness of the semantic formulas. Using Beebe et al.'s classification system, formulas classified as direct were performatives (e.g., "I refuse"), nonperformatives (e.g., "No"), and statements of negative willingness ("I can't). As shown in Appendix B, all other formulas were coded as indirect. Data were also analyzed according to the frequency of semantic formulas and the reasons for refusing.

Order and Directness of Semantic Formulas

By analyzing the coded data, we determined the sets of semantic formulas used by native American English and Egyptian Arabic speakers for each situation. As noted by Houck and Gass (1995), refusals are complex speech acts "primarily because they often involve lengthy negotiations as well as face-saving maneuvers" (p. 49). This complexity is illustrated by the number of formulas in each refusal. In the U.S. data, the average number of formulas is 5.4 with a range of 1 to 19. The Egyptian refusals averaged 3.2 formulas with a range from 1 to 11.

Requests

Lower status person refuses request: American English. In the lower status request, a boss asks an employee to spend an extra hour or two at work. In over half of the U.S. refusals, the respondents began with an utterance intended to mitigate the force of the refusal. Mitigations included (a) statements of regret such as

(1) I'm sorry; (AF1)

(b) wishes such as

(2) I wish I could; (AF20)

and (c) statements of positive opinion, as in

(3) I'd love to do that. (AM7)

In two thirds of the U.S. refusals, respondents provided a

reason for the refusal in the second position. As shown in the example below, most respondents elaborated on the reason and then closed with a statement of alternative, another form of mitigation.

(4) I would really love to, (wish)
but family matters are pressing. (reason)
I really have to get home. (reason)
Can we please do it another time? (statement of alternative)
I'd be glad to make it early tomorrow morning or evening. (statement of alternative) (AM24)

As shown in Figure 1, 14% or (~~give #~~ 15) of the U.S. formulas were coded as direct. Twelve or 40% of the respondents employed at least one direct formula.

(Insert Figure 1 About Here)

Lower status person refuses request: Egyptian Arabic. In contrast, over half of the Egyptian refusals began with the reason for refusing. A common formula used to mitigate the force of the refusal was a statement of alternative, used in a third of the refusals. The most common pattern, as illustrated below, began with a reason, followed by a statement of alternative.

(5) ana laazim arawwaH dilwa'ti (reason)
("I have to leave now")
laakin mumkin aagi bukra S-SubH wa-khaLLaS illi ana cayzaa (statement of alternative)

("but could come tomorrow morning to finish what I need.") (EF4)

Similar to the U.S. refusals, 11% (n=9) of the formalas were coded as direct. Nine Egyptian respondents included a direct formula in their refusal. Thus, in refusing requests from a lower to a higher status person, less than half of the American and Egyptian respondents used direct refusal formulas.

Equal status person refuses request: American English. In the equal status request, a classmate, who often misses class, asks to borrow the respondent's notes. In contrast to the lower status request, many of the U.S. respondents in the equal status request did not initially attempt to mitigate the force of the refusal. Eight began the refusal with a direct nonperformative comment (e.g., "No") and four with statement of negative willingness. Approximately 85% of the U.S. respondents provided a reason for refusing and the reason was usually in the first or second position. For example,

(6) No. (nonperformative comment)
You don't come to class. (reason)
You don't take your own notes (reason)
and I'm tired of pulling you along. (reason) (AF14)

This increased level of directness is illustrated in Figure 1; 36% of the formulas were coded as direct. Twenty-four (80%) of the respondents used at least one direct formula.

Equal status person refuses request: Egyptian Arabic. Three

formulas --reasons, negative willingness, and statements of alternatives -- were used in most of the Arabic refusals; however, no common order emerged. The following example illustrates a typical Arabic refusal:

(7) Ana mumkin addihuu-lak bukra bacd l-imtiHaan (statement of alternative)
("I may be able to give them to you tomorrow after the exam")
li'anni ana miHtaagu n-naharda azaakir fiih. (reason)
("because I need to study today.")
yacni ma candiish isticdaad addihuu-lak innaharda
(negative willingness)
("I am not ready to give them to you today.")
w-bukra bacd l-imtiHaan addi-huu-lak zaakir fiih zayy ma-nta caayiz aw s-sanah l-gayya law inta cayzu.
(statement of alternative)
("However, you may take them after the exam tomorrow or next year.") (EM7)

The Egyptian responses were similar to the American in terms of the percentage of direct formulas; 31% were coded as direct. A total of 19 or 80% of the respondents included direct formulas in their refusals.

Higher status person refuses request: American English. An employee asks a boss for the week-end off in the higher status request. It is the employee's mother's birthday. Most of the U.S. respondents mitigated their refusals with a statement of

either regret or empathy or with a reason. If the reason for refusing was not in the first position, it was almost always in the second position. Twenty-five per cent of the U.S. formulas were coded as direct (see Figure 1); in fact, a third of the U.S. refusals ended with a statement of negative willingness.

Higher status person refuses request: Egyptian Arabic. Most of the Arabic refusals began with a statement of regret or with a reason for refusing. A common pattern is illustrated in (8).

(8) fii shughl ktiir yum l-gumca (reason)
("There is a lot of work on Friday.")
wa bi-maa innak aHsan waaHid (reason)
("Because you are the best,")
fa-ana ma'darsh astaghna ᶜannak (negative willingness)
("I cannot spare you.") (EM20)

The percentage of direct refusal formulas in the Arabic data (24%) was almost identical to that of the U.S. data (25%). Thirteen (52%) of the Egyptian respondents used at least one direct formula in their refusals.

In refusing requests, both the American and Egyptian respondents varied their refusal strategies depending on the status of the interlocutors. What is particularly interesting is that little cultural variation existed as a result of status. As Figure 1 clearly indicates, respondents from both countries used less directness when refusing requests from persons of higher status, used the most directness when refusing persons of equal status, and used an intermediate level of directness when refusing

individuals of lower status.

Invitations

Lower status person refuses invitation: American English. In the lower status situation, the respondent refuses an invitation to the boss's party. Three fourths of the American respondents began their refusals with an attempt to soften the blow. Common beginnings were statements of regret, positive opinion, or gratitude. The mitigation was often followed by a reason for the refusal, often in the second but sometimes in the third position, and 75% of the refusals ended with a statement of negative willingness. A common pattern is illustrated below.

(9) Well, I would love to go. (positive opinion)
I really hope that you can excuse me from going to this thing (request for help by dropping request)
because we have important plans that we've had for months, you know, to attend a wedding. (reason)
I just really can't come. (negative willingness) (AM7)

As illustrated in Figure 2, 24% of the U.S. refusals were coded as direct. Twenty-three (77%) of the U.S. respondents used at least one direct formula.

(Insert Figure 2 About Here)

Lower status person refuses invitation: Egyptian Arabic. The Egyptian refusals were similar to the U.S. refusals. Almost half of the respondents began by softening the blow with a statement of regret and then provided reasons for the refusal. Eighty-eight percent included at least one reason for refusing and one third

included a direct statement of negative willingness. A common pattern is illustrated in (10).

(10) ana aasif (statement of regret)
("I am sorry.")
ana ma'darsh aruuH ana w-mraati yum l-Hadd da (negative willingness)
("My wife and I cannot go this Sunday")
ʿashaan bi-nukhrug fiih ʿand walditi. (reason)
("because this is the day in which we visit my mother.")
(EM5)

Sixteen percent of the Egyptian formulas were coded as direct and only 9 Egyptians included any type of direct formula in their refusal. This frequency is lower than for the America respondents.

Equal status person refuses invitation: American English. The respondent in the equal status situation refuses a friend's invitation to dinner. In the U.S. refusals, a great deal of variation exists. For instance, beginning formulas included reasons, repetitions of part of the request, nonperformative comments, and so forth. Less variation exists, however, in the second position; approximately half of the respondents gave a reason. Variation occurs again in the third and/or fourth positions with formulas coded as negative willingness, regret, future acceptance, and gratitude.

As illustrated in Figure 2, 19% of the U.S. formulas were coded as direct. Less than half of the U.S. respondents uttered a

direct formula.

Equal status person refuses invitation: Egyptian Arabic. In the Egyptian refusals, variation also exists. First, second, and third position formulas included statements of regret, statements of alternative, reasons, and statements of negative willingness. A third of the respondents made a promise of future acceptance in the final position. A typical refusal is exemplied in (11).

(11) la' (nonperformative)
("No")
ma$^{\varsigma}$leshsh. (statement of regret)
("I'm sorry.")
khalliiha yum taani (statement of alternative)
("Make it another day.")
s-sabt l-gayy, ana mashguula khaaliS (reason)
("I am very busy next Saturday.") (EF 16)

As shown in Figure 2, Egyptians employed a higher percentage of direct formulas than Americans. In addition, more Egyptian respondents (16 or 64%) uttered at least one direct refusal.

Higher status person refuses invitation: American English. The respondents are presidents of a company in the higher status situation. A salesman from another company invites them to dinner. Over half of the U.S. respondents began their refusal by mitigating its force. The most commonly used mitigations were statements of appreciation, regret, alternative, or positive opinion. A reason was frequently given in the second and/or third position and half of the responses included negative willingness.

This pattern is illustrated below.

(12) I'm sorry. (regret)
I've got a previous engagement. (reason)
My family's already doing something, (reason)
so I can't come tonight. (negative willingness) (AF22)

In addition, eleven respondents expressed gratitude (e.g., "thanks"), usually in the first or last position of the refusal. Twenty-four per cent of the U.S. formulas were direct and 22 (73%) respondents employed a direct formula at least once.

Higher status person refuses invitation: Egyptian Arabic. The Egyptian respondents seemed less concerned with mitigating the force of the refusal in the opening utterance. Only four respondents began their refusals with statements of regret. Many began with nonperformative statements or statements of negative willingness. Reasons were often given in the second or third position as in (13).

(13) mish Ha'dar, (negative willingness)
("I can't.")
iHna mumkin nitkallim fi l-mawDuᶜ da fi maᶜaad sh-shughl
(statement of alternative)
("We can discuss this matter during working hours")
laakin ana mish mitᶜawwida akhrug waHdii bi-l-leel (
reason)
("because I am not used to going out alone at night.")
(EF 21)

Twenty-five per cent of the formulas were direct.

In this set of refusals, many of the Americans in the equal and higher status situations, expressed gratitude, a strategy not used in refusing requests. Although requests and invitations are both situations that often call for refusals, they differ in that, the interloculor, in making a request is often asking a favor, while in issuing an invitation, the interlocutor is attempting to be kind and to please the other person. This difference may account for the amount of gratitude expressed by the Americans. Because the interlocutor was attempting to please, many Americans responded with a "thank you."

As in their responses to requests, the Americans and Egyptians tended to use both direct and indirect formulas in all status situations. The U.S. respondents tended to be more direct when refusing a person of higher status and the Egyptian respondents were more direct with status equals. Both groups were similar in the frequency of directness when interacting with a person of lower status.

Offers

Lower status person refuses offer: American English. In the lower status offer, a boss offers the respondents a raise and promotion if they are willing to move to a small town. Over half of the U.S. respondents began with an attempt to soften the blow, often with a statement of positive opinion. In all, 28 of the 30 respondents gave at least one reason for their refusal and half included a statement of negative willingness. Most of the refusals contained an expression of gratitude, often at the

beginning or the end. An example is given below.

(14) As much as I'd like to say yes, (statement of positive opinion)
for a lot of professional and certain personal reasons, (reason)
I just can't. (negative willingness)
Thanks for the offer. (gratitude) (AM5)

Over half of the respondents (19 or 63%) used a type of direct formula.

Lower status person refuses offer: Egyptian Arabic. The Egyptian respondents differed from the U.S. respondents in that most did not cushion the refusal in the opening statement. Thirteen or 52% began with negative willingness or nonperformative statements. The most common formulas in the second and third positions were reasons. This pattern is given in refusal (15).

(15) ma'darsh aruuH (negative willingness)
("I cannot go,")
a'ᶜud hinaak li-waHdi (reason)
("and stay there by myself.")
(hiyya) biᶜida giddan ᶜan ahlii (reason)
("It is very far from my family.")
kamaan, laazim aakhud baali min mamti (reason)
("Besides, I also have to take care of my mother.")
wa ma'darsh asaafir l-massafa di kullaha (reason)

("I cannot travel all this distance,")

wa-'ʿud li-waHdi fi l-wagh l-'ibli (reason)

("and stay alone in Upper Egypt.") (EF2)

As shown in Figure 3, the U.S. and Egyptian respondents both used direct formulas with similar frequency in refusing offers to higher status individuals. Nineteen or 63% of the U.S. and 19 or 76% of the Egyptian respondents included at least one direct formula in their refusal.

(Insert Figure 3 About Here)

Equal status person refuses offer: American English. In the equal status offer, a friend offers the respondent another piece of cake. Predominantly three types of formulas were used by the American respondents and they were usually in the same order. Almost all began with a nonperformative statement; followed by an expression of gratitude and a reason. This pattern is illustrated in (16).

(16) No, (nonperformative statement)
thanks. (expression of gratitude)
I'm on a diet. (reason) (AM29)

Twenty-seven or 90% of the U.S. respondents a direct refusal.

Equal status person refuses offer: Egyptian Arabic. The Arabic responses were similar to the English responses. Over half of the respondents began their refusal with a nonperformative statement or a statement of negative willingness. Almost 90% of the respondents gave a reason or a statement of negative

willingness in the second and third positions. Refusal (17) illustrates this common Egyptian pattern.

(17) la' (nonperformative)
("No.")
bi-SaraaHa ana ʿandi HumuuDa (reason)
("Frankly, I suffer from some acidity")
mish Ha'dar aakul keek, (negative wilingness)
("and will not be able to eat cake.") (EM13)

Eighteen or 72% of the Egyptian respondents used a direct formula.

Higher status person refuses offer: American English. In the higher status situation, the respondent arrives home and notices that the cleaning lady has broken a vase. The cleaning lady offers to pay for it. The U.S. responses to this situation were similar. All but one of the respondents employed the formula of letting the interlocutor off the hook, usually in the first, second, or last position. Many respondents gave reasons for letting the interlocutor off the hook and also used nonperformative comments, often in the first position. A common pattern is illustrated in (18).

(18) No. (nonperformative comment)
Don't sweat it. (let interlocutor off hook)
It was a wedding gift from people we haven't talked to in many years, (reason)
so don't worry about it. (let interlocutor off hook)
(AM2)

Half of the U.S. respondents used a direct refusal formula.

Higher status person refuses offer: Egyptian Arabic. The Egyptian responses were similar to the U.S. responses. Over 75% of the Egyptian respondents also let the cleaning lady off the hook; 40% began their refusal with a nonperformative statement, and half gave a reason. Many of the Egyptian respondents "let interlocutor off the hook" based on some future action (e.g., the maid is let off the hook but she needs to pay more attention to such things in the future). There were nine instances in which such advice was given and seven of these involved the expression khalli/khudi baalik ("pay attention").

Two of the Egyptian respondents made reference to Allah ("God") as the reason why this happened and why the maid is not responsible. These references illustrate the extent that religion (i.e., Islam) is integrated into Arabic (for further discussion, see Adelman & Lustig, 1981 and Davies, 1987). An example refusal is given below.

(19) di Haaga 'adar (let interlocutor off hook)
("This a [a] destiny [thing]")
w-inti malkiish dhanb fiiha. (let interlocutor off hook)
("and you have no fault in [committing] it.")
ya^{C}ni di Haagha khalaaS ba'a ma-daam rabbina mish raayid laha.
(let interlocutor off hook)
("This [the vase] is something that our God did not want for it [to exist]." (EM10)

As shown in Figure 3, in refusing offers, both U.S. and Egyptian respondents used fewer direct strategies in refusing the higher status person than in the other status situations.

Depending on the status of the interlocutors, both the American and Egyptian respondents varied the directness of their formulas in refusing offers. Both groups employed more direct formulas in refusing status equals and fewer direct formulas in refusing individuals of lower status.

Suggestions

Lower status person refuses suggestion: American English. In the lower status situation, the respondents (i.e., employees) are searching through the mess on their desks and the boss walks in and gives them a suggestion on how to be better organized. U.S. responses to this situation varied greatly. Opening formulas included gratitude, negative willingness, reasons, and self-defense. Over half of the refusals included at least one reason and many expressed gratitude, used a statement of negative willingness, and/or used a statement of alternative.

Lower status person refuses suggestion: Egyptian Arabic. Egyptian responses to this situation also varied. Opening formulas included statements of philosophy, nonperformative statements, negative willingness, and reasons. Half of the refusals included a reason somewhere in the refusal.

As shown in Figure 4, the U.S. and Egyptian respondents both used a small percentage of direct formulas when refusing an individual of higher status. In addition, only 7 (28%) of the Egyptian respondents used a direct formula in their refusals.

(Insert Figure 4 About Here)

Equal status person refuses suggestion: American English. Respondents were asked by a friend to try a new diet in the equal status situation. Similar formulas were used by the U.S. respondents, but the order of the formulas varied. Common formulas included reasons, gratitude, statements of principle, and negative willingness. This situation produced more statements of principal from the Americans than any other situation. An example is

(20) I don't believe in fad dieting. (statement of principal) (AM8)

Equal status person refuses suggestion: Egyptian Arabic. The Egyptian respondents used a more limited number of formulas than the U.S. respondents; in fact, two formulas were used predominantly. Half of the respondents provided reasons and half uttered statements of negative willingness. An example refusal is given below.

(21) istiHaala! (negative willingness)
("Impossible!")
ana mashya ʿala niZaam (reason)
("I am following a diet,")
w-ma' darsh aghayyaru. (negative willingness)
("and cannot change it.") (EF 25)

As shown in Figure 4, the percentage of direct formulas used by

Egyptian respondents was twice as great as that used by the U.S. respondents. Correspondingly, 17 or 68% of the Egyptians used at least one direct formula and less than half (46%) of the U.S. respondents did.

Higher status person refuses suggestion: American English. In the higher status situation, a university student thinks that a professor has been lecturing too much in class. The student asks the professor to give more activities that involve application of the material. The respondent is the professor. U.S. respondents used similar formulas in replying to this situation, but, as in the equal status situation, the order of the formulas varied. The respondents stated reasons, expressed gratitude at the beginning or end of the refusal, expressed negative willingness, and provided statements of alternative. A third used a direct formaula in the refusal.

Higher status person refuses suggestion: Egyptian Arabic. The Arabic responses differed from the English in that no expressions of gratitude were made and in six cases, the requester was criticized as illustrated below.

(22) lamma tbaTTalu kalaam (criticize requester)
("When you stop talking")
wi-taHtarimu nafsuku (criticize requester)
("and you respect yourselves,")
ab'a addiiqu taTbiiqaat ziyaada (promise of future acceptance)
("I will give you more practical applications.") (EM 23)

Moreover, in six cases, harsh alternatives were given, such as in (23).

(23) wallahi, inta mish Ha-tʿallim adarris izzaay (criticize requester)
("By God, you are not going to teach me how to teach.")
iHna Tuul ʿumrina fi t-tadriis (reason)
("We have always been teaching.")
w-ʿagbak tiHDar ʿala n-niZam da iHDar (threat of negative consequences)
("If you accept the system, attend class.")
mish ʿagbak tiHDar Hadd taani zaakir fi l-beet, (statement of alternative)
("If you don't, attend another section of the course or study at home.")
titHammil natigtak akhri s-sana (threat of negative consequences)
("You are responsible for your results at the end of the year.")
tis'aT ma Tis'aTsh maliish daʿwa biik.(threat of negative consequences)
("You fail or you don't fail.)(EM7)

The Egyptian refusals in this situation reflect the type of power relationship that often exists between professor and students. Professors have control over the curriculum, and students in most Egyptian universities do not have input in evaluating professors

and/or their methods of teaching (Nelson, El Bakary, & Fathi, 1996). Criticism of a professor's teaching can come from above (e.g., a supervisor or senior colleague) but not from below. Professors are likely to perceive such suggestions as an encroachment on their territory and power.

In refusing suggestions, both groups employed a similar degree of direct formulas in the status unequal situations, but in the status equal situation, Egyptians used almost twice as many direct formulas as Americans. Thus, in all status equal situations, the Egyptians uttered more direct formulas than in the status unequal situations.

Frequency of Semantic Formulas

In order to compare the frequency of semantic formulas used by Americans and Egyptians, the number of each semantic formula was counted. As shown in Table 5, seventeen categories accounted for approximately 94% of the formulas used in the American refusals and eighteen categories accounted for 92% of the formulas used in the Egyptian refusals. There were 1605 formulas used in the U.S. refusals. By far the greatest number were identified as providing a reason or excuse for the refusal. Reasons accounted for 498 or 31% of the total number of formulas used. Negative willingness was the second most popular formula and was used 204 times, accounting for 13% of the formulas. Formulas coded as nonperformative "no" and gratitude accounted for 7% of the total.

(Insert Table 5 About Here)

There were 963 formulas used in the Egyptian refusals. The most common formulas used by the Egyptian respondents were similar to those used by the U.S. respondents. Reasons were the most

common formula used with 408 or 42% of the formulas coded as reasons. Negative willingness was the second most common formula with 141 or 15% of the formulas. Nonperformative "no"'s were used in 58 or 6% of the refusals. The Egyptian respondents also differed from the U.S. respondents. Expressions of gratitude were used in only 14 or 2% of the refusals.

Reasons for Refusing

An important component of the refusals are the reasons that are given for refusing. To analyze the reasons that were given, all of the reasons for a specific situation were listed and then grouped by two of the researchers according to shared characteristics. Most of the reasons were classified as either general (e.g., "I have plans") or specific ("It's my husband's birthday and we're going to dinner." If they were specific, they further classified according to the type of reason (e.g., family). Each respondent's reason was given only one classification. If a series of reasons were given and one was specific, the total set was coded as specific; if no specific reason was given, the set was coded as general. Reasons used in the situation about the maid dropping the vase were not included because they were not consistent with the other types of reasons.

The most noteable finding was the similarity in the reasons given by the Egyptians and the Americans. As shown in Table 2, 66% of the American and 70% of the Egypitan reasons were coded as specific. Both groups frequently cited specific commitments to families as grounds for a refusal. The frequency of non-specific reasons was also similar; 34% of the U.S. and 30% of the Egyptian reasons were coded as general.

(Insert Table 2 About Here)

In the situation where the student asked the professor to use a different teaching style, the Egyptians gave reasons that were different from the Americans. The Egyptian respondents were more likely to refer to their positions as professors as in waLLaahi ana raagil duktuur, ma-Haddish yiʿallimni izzay adarris luku ("By God, I am a professor, no one [can] tell me how to teach you.") The Americans, on the other hand, were more likely to explain that lecturing was the best way to teach the content of the course.

Focus on Second Language Learners

This study investigated similarities and differences between U.S. and Egyptian refusals. Perhaps the most surprising finding was the number of similarities between the two groups. Arabic cultures have been described as preferring an indirect communication style and the U.S. has been characterized as preferring direct communication (Cohen, 1987, 1990; Feghali, 1997; Katriel, 1986; Zaharna, 1995). The findings of this study, however, reveal that Egyptians often employed more direct refusal strategies than Americans. This discrepancy between the literature on Arabic communication style and the findings of this study suggests the importance of investigating language use in specific contexts. It also illustrates the danger of making generalizations about a language's or culture's communication style as if one style (e.g., direct vs. indirect) is used in all situations.

Consistent with the work of Stevens (1993), both groups also employed similar semantic formulas when making refusals and many were used with equal degrees of frequency. For example, in both

groups, frequent formulas included providing reasons, making statements of negative willingness, using nonperformatives, and stating alternatives. The groups also employed similar reasons when refusing, using both specific and non-specific reasons and often making references to family commitments. American learners of Arabic and Arabic learners of English can use these similarities to their advantage, for as noted by Kasper (1997) and Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993), strategies that are consistent across L1 and L2 usually result in communicative success.

In terms of status, the two groups shared similarities and differences. Katriel (1986) proposes that among Arabic speakers, a person in a lower status position frequently uses indirect communication strategies when addressing a person in a higher status position. The findings of this study suggest that the relationship between indirectness and status depends on the specific situation. For example, in refusing requests, invitations, and suggestions in the low to high status situation, the Arabic speakers used more indirect communication strategies than in refusing offers. Conversely, in refusing offers, the Arabic speakers used more direct strategies in the lower to higher status situation. Among the Arabic speakers, across all four situations, the greatest numbers of direct formulas were used among status equals. This finding contradicts Hussein (1995) who reports that indirect refusals are used in equal status relationships.

In the unequal status situations, the English and Arabic speakers exhibited similar levels of directness and indirectness. Again, these similarities, if used by L2 learners, can result in

pragmatic success. However, in two equal status situations, invitations and suggestions, the English speakers differed from the Arabic speakers. Americans were less direct in their refusals. This difference could result in pragmatic failure, particularly if the native Arabic speakers refuse in a more direct manner than is considered polite by native English speakers.

Although both Egyptians and Americans used many of the same semantic formulas, at times they used them in different orders depending on the situation. Specific differences include the following:

1) Consistent with the findings of Beebe et al. (1990), for the higher and lower status requests, U.S. respondents frequently began the refusal with a formula that mitigated the force of the rejection and then stated a reason for refusing. The Egyptians, on the other hand, in the unequal status requests, often began with a reason followed by a form of mitigation.

2) In refusing invitations from higher to lower status interlocutors, the Egyptians were more likely than the Americans to begin with a direct refusal followed by a reason.

3) In refusing offers from a lower to higher status person, Egyptians were less likely than Americans to begin the refusal with a form of mitigation. They were more likely to use a direct refusal formula followed by a reason.

Overall, the order of formulas in the Egyptian data revealed more variability than in the U.S. data.

A final difference in refusal formuals is Americans' frequent use of expressions of gratitude (for further information on expressions of gratitude, see Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986),

particularly in refusing invitations, offers, and suggestions. In order for students of English and Arabic to avoid pragmatic failure, the sociolinguistic rules regarding differences in the role of status, the degree of directness and expressions of gratitude in making refusals should be explicitly taught. As Kasper (1997) points out, pragmatic competence does not necessarily develop naturally as students become more proficient is a second or foreign language. Pragmatic/sociolinguistic information needs to be taught.

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Appendix A

Refusal Situations: Modified Discourse Completion Test

1. You are the owner of a bookstore. One of your best workers asks to speak to you in private. The worker says, "I know that this will be a busy week-end at the store, but it's my mother's birthday and we have planned a big family get together. I'd like to take the week-end off.

2. You are in your third year of college. You attend classes and you take really good notes. Your classmate often misses a class and asks you for the lecture notes. On this occasion, your classmate says, "Oh no! We have an exam tomorrow but I don't have the notes from last week. I am sorry to ask you this, but could you please lend me your notes once again?"

3. You are the president of a printing company. A salesman from a company that sells paper invites you to an expensive dinner. The salesman says, "We have met several times to discuss your purchase of my company's products. I was wondering if you would like to be my guest at the (name of expensive restaurant) in order to firm up the contract.

4. You are a top executive at a very large accounting firm. One day the boss calls you into his office. He says, "Next Sunday my wife and I are having a little party. I know it's short notice, but I'm hoping that all of my top executives will be there with their spouses. What do you say?"

5. You're at a friend's house watching TV. The friend offers you a snack. You turn it down, saying that you've gained some weight and don't feel comfortable in your new clothes. Your friend says, "Hey, why don't you try this new diet I've been telling you about?"

6. You're at your desk trying to find a report that your boss just asked for. While you're searching through the mess on your desk, your boss walks over and says, "You know, maybe you should try and organize yourself better. I always write myself little notes to remind me of things. Perhaps you should give it a try."

7. You arrive home and notice that your cleaning lady is extremely upset. She comes rushing up to you and says, "Oh God, I'm so sorry! I had an awful accident. While I was cleaning I bumped into the tables and your china vase fell and broke. I just feel terrible about it."

8. You're a teacher at a university. It is just about the middle of the term now and one of your students asks to speak to you. The student says, "Ah, excuse me. Some of the students were talking after class recently and we kind of feel that you lecture a lot in class. Could you give us more application or case studies in class?"

9. You're at a friend's house for lunch. Your friend says, "How about another piece of cake?"

10. A friend invites you to dinner, but you really can't stand this friend's fiance. Your friend says, "How about coming over for dinner Saturday night? We're having a small dinner party."

11. You've been working in an advertising agency now for some time. The boss offers you a raise and a promotion, but it involves moving. You don't want to go. Today, the boss calls you into his office. He says, "I'd like to offer you an executive position in our new offices in (name of smaller town). It's a great town -- only three hours from here by plane. And, a nice raise comes with the position."

12. You are at the office in a meeting with your boss. It is getting close to the end of the day and you want to leave work. But your boss says, "If you don't mind, I'd like you to spend an extra hour or two tonight so that we can finish this."

Table 2

Refusing Invitations: Typical Order of Semantic Formulas

Refuser Status	Nationality	Order			
Lower	American	(mitigation)	reason *	reason	negative willigness
	Egyptian	(mitigation) regret	reason *	negative willigness	
Equal	American	(variation)	reason*	(variation)	(variation)
	Egyptian	(variation)	reason*	(variation)	
Higher	American	(mitigation)	reason *	reason	negative willigness
	Egyptian	(variation)	reason	negative willigness	

( ) Not a coding category
* Multiple uses of this formula possible
<--> Formulas may be interchanged

Mitigations

Statements of Regret
Statements of Alternative
future acceptance - condition
Promise of future acceptance
statement of positive opinion
" of empathy

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Formulas in Each Category for American and Egyptian Refusals

Coding Categories (n= (963)	Americans (n=1605)		Egyptians	
	Number	%	Number	%
Performative	23	01%	10	01%
Nonperformative "No"	109	07%	58	06%
Negative Willingness	204	13%	141	15%
Statement of Regret	95	06%	73	08%
Reason/Excuse	498	31%	408	42%
Statement of Alternative	104	06%	63	07%
Condition for Future/Past Acceptance	21	01%	12	01%
Promise of Future/Past Acceptance	15	01%	18	02%
Statement of Principle	44	03%	23	02%
Criticize Requester	06	00%	15	02%
Let Off Hook	80	05%	27	03%
Repetitionof Request	15	01%	4	00%
Postponement	34	02%	21	02%
Hedging	56	04%	4	00%
Statement/Positive Feeling	82	05%	12	01%
Statement of Empathy	19	01%	2	00%
Gratitude	111	07%	14	02%
Other	89	06%	58	08%
Total	1605	100%	963	100%

Table 2: Number and Percentage of Types Reasons Given By American and Egyptian Respondents in 11 Refusal Situations

	Nationality of Respondents	
	American	Egyptian
Reasons		
Specific	198 (66%)	157 (70%)
General	102 (34%)	68 (35%)
Total	300 (100%)	225 (100%)

Figure 1: Refusing Requests: Percentage of Direct Formulas Given by Americans and Egyptians in Three Status Relationships

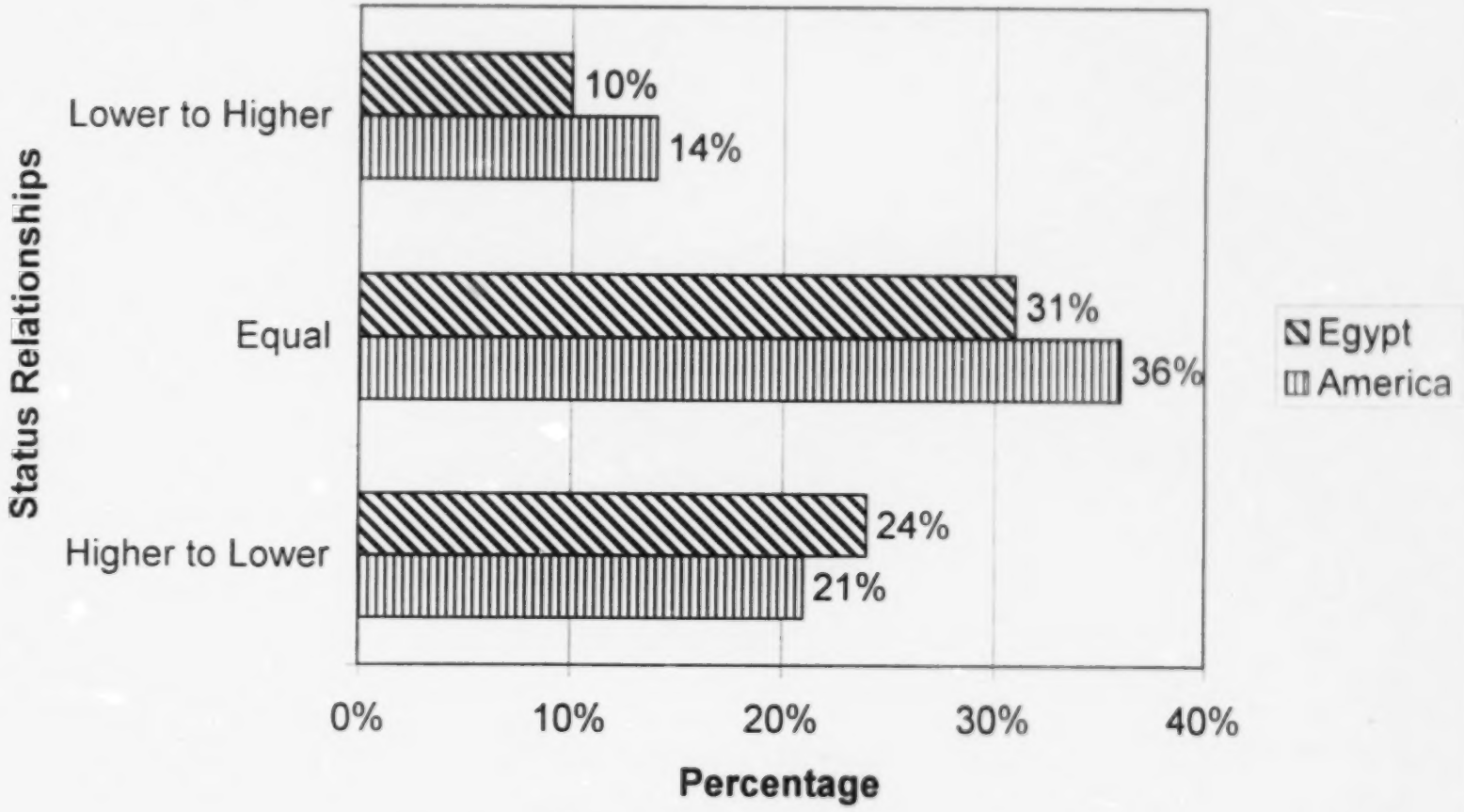

Figure 2: Refusing Invitations: Percentage of Direct Formulas Given by American and Egyptians in Three Status Relationships

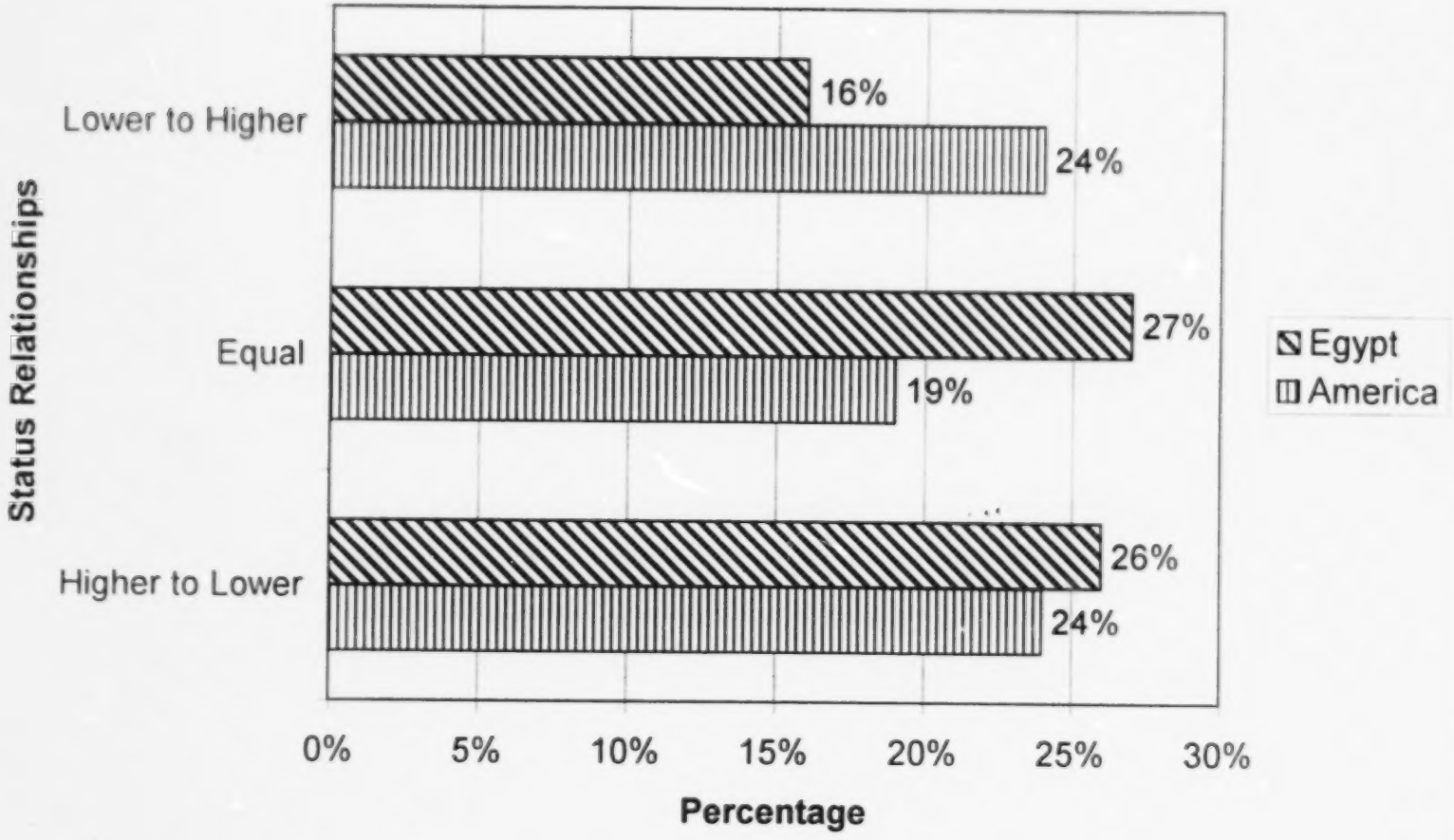

Figure 3: Refusing Offers: Percentage of Direct Formulas Given by Americans and Egyptians in Three Status Relationships

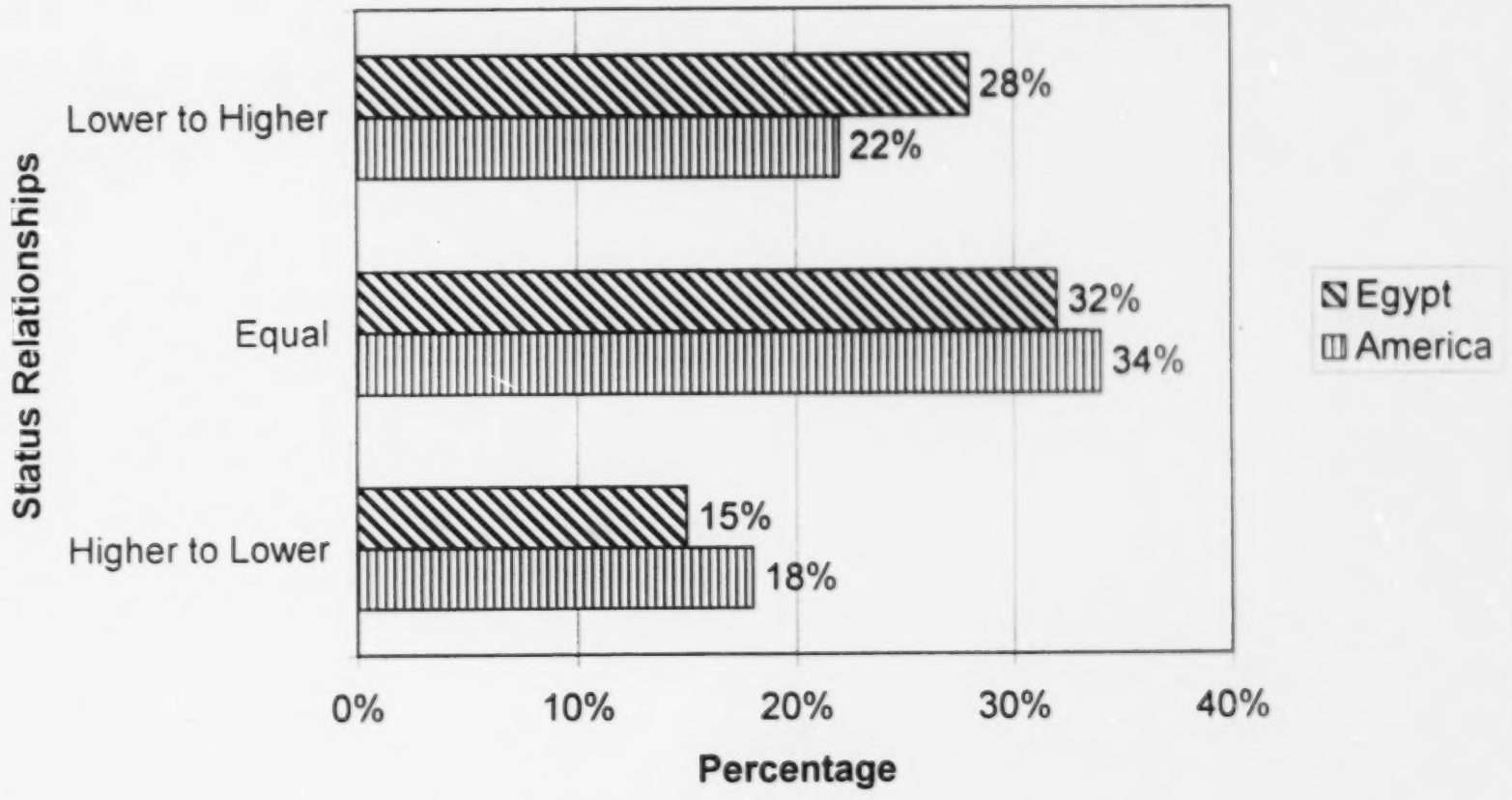

Figure 4: Refusing Suggestions: Percentage of Direct Formulas Given by Americans and Egyptians in Three Status Relationships